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THE BUSH CONNECTION

Is George Bush hiding
the facts behind the
Letelier assassination?

It was early morning on November 24, 1976, when a troubled George Bush slipped secretly and quietly into Miami. His boss, Gerald Ford, had just been defeated by Jimmy Carter and Bush's days as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, like those of his superior in the White House, were numbered.

An uncertain future wasn't troubling Bush that November morning. He had other, more immediate problems to deal with. He was in Miami because he was caught in a di-

Article by John Cummings

lemma. Bush had been ordered by Ford to cooperate with the Justice Department's investigation into the murder of Orlando Letelier, former Chilean Foreign Minister under Salvador Allende. Letelier, a leftist, had been head of the Chilean exile movement in the United States and had been disliked by the American-backed Chilean military junta. There was the rub for Bush. He had been ordered to investigate the murder, but he had intelligence "assets" to protect. And in his estimation, the "assets" were more important than the investigation.

Seven weeks earlier a radio-controlled bomb was placed under the eye-beam of Letelier's car. It exploded on Washington's embassy row, killing Letelier and a female passenger, Ronni Karpen Moffitt. The assassination came as a shock to a nation that thought such things could happen only in Beirut or Belfast . . . and the nation demanded an explanation.

Eighteen months after Letelier's death the case was pronounced "solved." Michael Vernon Townley, an American expatriate who worked as a professional assassin for Chilean intelligence and whose testimony convicted three Cuban exiles from New Jersey, was arrested. Two Chilean intelligence officials were charged with aiding in the murder but were not extradited. Two other exile terrorists were indicted, but never arrested. And the U.S. accepted at face value the statement of Chilean President Augusto Pinochet, who said that his intelligence agency acted alone, without presidential approval, in the Letelier murder.

An investigation of Bush's activities after Letelier's death turned up many peculiarities and much deception. Investigation showed that:

- Three months before his death the FBI knew that Letelier had been targeted for assassination . . . but did nothing to stop it.
- Though it took almost two years before indictments were returned against the conspirators, the FBI had the names of most of them no more than 72 hours after Letelier was murdered.

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